Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

Recreational Licensed Child Care
2016-2076 Parent Manual

(Licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care)

Welcome to the RLC Family

It is with great pleasure I welcome your family to the **Recreational Licensed Child Care program (RLC)**, a section of the Recreational Licensed Child Care & Community Services Division of Howard County Recreation & Parks. The RLC Division has been in operation since 1986, proudly serving the children and families of Howard County during the school year and summer. Over the years the division has grown to include camps, middle school programs, preschool programs (known as Early Learning Centers (ELC)), two Therapeutic Recreation after-school programs and grant-funded programs. Currently we are in 22 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, Cedar Lane School and host 4 Early Learning Centers. We also now encompass Trips and Tours, along with programs for citizens aged 55+, Teen and grant programs. Please visit our website for more information: www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks.

Our Recreational Licensed Child Care program has grown to serve more than 2,500 county residents. Our programs offer a variety of activities for your child(ren), including active group games to keep them moving and healthy, hands-on activities and healthy cooking projects. Throughout the year there are opportunities for children to participate in ***intra-school competitions*** in football, basketball, a spelling bee and a track & field event. There is something here for every child!
Don't forget that pre-registration for the 2017-2018 school year for those currently enrolled begins on October 4, 2016. Open enrollment for all begins November 1, 2016.

We are licensed and inspected by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. The Office of Child Care sets regulations; Recreation and Parks sets policies and procedures. These guidelines are all in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. We are participating in the Maryland EXCELS program and the ELC's have all successfully completed the Healthy Howard Healthy Childcare Initiative.

The mission of our child care programs are to: **"Provide a safe, nurturing and quality program for the youth of Howard County**." We believe in providing services to all residents without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, national origin, physical/mental ability, gender, creed or any other basis. Our programs are equal opportunity programs. We are looking forward to a fun-filled year together! Thank you for giving us the opportunity to take care of your most precious asset – your child(ren).

With Warm Regards,

Nicola Morgal

Nicola Morgal, CPRP
Recreation & Parks Superintendent
Recreation Licensed Child Care & Community Services Division

Recreational Licensed Child Care and Community Services Division Information

Office phone number: 410-313-3706

Office fax number: 410-313-4722

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Joynel K. Young, Recreation Manager	410-313-2637
Therapeutic Recreation & Accommodation Services	
Susan Potts, Manager	410-313-4628
Ruth Coleman, Coordinator	410-323-4708
TRIO - Cedar Lane Park	410-313-7399
TRIO - Cedar Lane School	410-888-8883
Registration	**410-313-7275**

Claudia Charity, Supervisor
410-313-4636
Programs Supervised:

Bollman Bridge	410-880-5859
Ducketts Lane	410-313-6070
Elkridge	410-313-4957
Forest Ridge	410-880-5857
Gorman Crossing	410-880-5971
Ilchester	410-313-2696
Laurel Woods	410-880-5860

Lakishia Major, Coordinator
410-313-4717
Programs Supervised:

Lisbon	410-313-5423
CAN-TEEN Club:	
Bonnie Branch	410-313-2632
Elkridge Landing	410-313-5189
Ellicott Mills	410-313-2735
Folly Quarter	410-313-5898
Patapsco	410-313-2607
Thomas Viaduct	410-313-2980
Lime Kiln	410-888-8832

Shavon Gordon, Supervisor
410-313-4633
Programs Supervised:

Bushy Park	410-313-5422
Dayton Oaks	410-313-7583
Fulton	410-880-5973
Pointers Run	410-313-7277

Julia Martin, Coordinator
410-313-1687
Programs Supervised:

Manor Woods	410-313-7244
Triadelphia Ridge	410-313-5470
West Friendship	410-313-5424

Brian Murphy, Coordinator
410-313-4797
Programs Supervised:

Early Learning Centers:	
Bushy Park ELC	410-313-5499
Fulton ELC	410-880-5974
Triadelphia Ridge ELC	410-313-5471
Roger Carter Comm. Ctr. ELC	410-313-2749

Glen Turner, Supervisor
410-313-4713
Programs Supervised:

Deep Run	410-313-4956
Hollifield Station	410-313-2794
St. John's Lane	410-313-2692
Veterans	410-313-1495
Waverly	410-313-2693

Donna Jackson-Parker, Coordinator
410-313-1669
Programs Supervised:

Bellows Spring	410-313-5147
Rockburn	410-313-4922

***** Site assignments are subject to change *****

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About Us

PROGRAM CONTENT

The Mission and Philosophy of our programs is to provide a safe, nurturing, active and creative learning environment for all children of all abilities. We are mindful of each child's cultural background and learning needs when planning activities. Program plans reflect the children's varied interests and offers a variety of self-directed, teacher-led, group and individual activities; ranging from active games, arts & crafts to science and music. There are active and quiet activity times offered. Televisions, computers, tablets and the like are not a part of our monthly planning and will not be used more than once per month. If they are used at all, it is as a supplement the age appropriate monthly activities. The content of each program follows established guidelines however weekly themes and schedules may differ by site. Through fun, purposeful and engaging activities they will:

- Learn to work independently and in cooperative groups
- Foster intellectual curiosity
- Continue to build the social, academic & emotional skills appropriate for their age group
- Develop their confidence and help them reach their fullest potential

All programs are regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care (OCC), who gives us our license to operate. We are also inspected every year. There's a 1:15 staff to child ratio. All staff members complete a criminal background check, medical examination and must meet the standards set-forth by the OCC for each position. Directors and teachers have experience and training specific to school age children to meet the requirements set forth by the OCC. All staff attends the requisite number of hours of continued training each year. Trainings include First Aid, CPR, child development, health, safety, special needs and professionalism. We have many locations for our programs; however the rules, licensing regulations, procedures and policies are consistent throughout.

School-Age Program –

The programs are held in the cafeteria of each school. The children are grouped into groups of thirty with two staff members assigned to each group. Children are given a snack in both the morning and afternoon programs. The morning program allows for group games and hands-on activities. In the afternoon, after snack, children will begin their rotations and go outside (weather permitting), begin hands on activities (arts and crafts, music, cooking, science, nature etc.) and have an opportunity to work on homework. After active play, space will be provided for additional homework time and quiet activities. However, homework is an optional choice for the children, but will be encouraged by the staff at the request of the parent(s). Please be mindful we are in the cafeteria at most schools and will control the noise-level, but cannot provide a silent homework area. We also are sometimes asked to relocate for other school functions. We will do our best to make you aware of this as soon as we know about it.

Can-TEEN Program

The Can-TEEN Program is an after school recreational program geared to the needs of young teens. Programs are structured and provide a variety of age appropriate leisure experiences. These activities will include games and sports, arts and crafts, trips and special events. Free time will also be included for participants to work on their own projects, do homework, or spend time with friends. Some trips

will require additional fees to cover admission and transportation expenses. For further information please feel free to contact the program supervisor at lmajor@howardcountymd.gov.

Early Learning Centers
Offered in four locations, the ELC programs provide children with the skills necessary to be successful in Kindergarten. As a recreation-based program, there are opportunities for self-directed and instructional activities. There are cognitive and academic activities to enhance math/language arts skills, along with arts/crafts, science and nature, cooking, multicultural and drama activities. For further information please feel free to contact the program supervisor at bmurphy@howardcountymd.gov.

Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Opportunities
The TRIO programs is self-regulated, after-school and designed especially to meet the needs of teens with disabilities ages 13-21 years old. Each program is highly structured and provides a wide variety of appropriate leisure experiences. Participants will participate in activities such as sports and games, arts and crafts, cooking projects, community outings and special events.

Homework Club
The Homework Club is an after-school enrichment programs especially geared towards the residents of the Ellicott City community. The program is set up to provide children with the necessary assistance needed to complete their academic obligations in a positive environment. The program offers leisure activities that include; games, art and crafts, cooking projects, community outings and special events.

Optional Full Day Programs
We will offer Full Day Care, opening at 7 AM and closing at 6 PM, on selected days when schools are closed; these programs are only open to those children currently enrolled in the RLC Program. There is an additional fee of $40 per day for these programs (unless otherwise noted), which includes snacks, project supplies, facility use and center staff. Please refer to your coupon book for dates, locations and note the registration deadlines. Registration must be received at least 5 (five) business days in advance. Registration will not be accepted beyond these deadlines. You can register by calling 410.313.7275.

If your child requires a companion, parents need to request a companion at the same time they are registering for the optional full day, as companions are not guaranteed. The full day programs are a combined Kindergarten through fifth grade program. In order for an optional day program to run there must be at minimum of twenty (20) children enrolled. If there are less than twenty (20) children the program can be cancelled but if space is available you may transfer to another location. Parents must provide lunch that is NUT FREE for their child. We do not have refrigeration or a microwave available for lunches, but milk is available for the children to drink at lunch.

Intra-School Activities

Each season schools are given the opportunity to participate in several competitions. Parents are always invited and welcome to come enjoy the event while supporting your child in their endeavors. There is the annual Turkey Bowl; a flag football competition complete with cheerleaders, hosted in November; a March Madness basketball tournament held in the winter, a Hand Ball tournament, a Spelling Bee usually held in the spring at North Laurel Community Center and wrapping up the events is a Track and Field competition in June. For the last three years there has also been a fabulous line dance competition held (JamFest) and the regional winners have performed at the Camp Day Fair held in May. The First Tee is also being piloted in select sites with rollout to more schools in the future. All of these are wonderful opportunities for the children to create memories!

PROGRAM RATES

The monthly program fees are established on a yearly basis based on cost and must be self-supporting. Fees are subject to change during the year and are based on five days per week and are a monthly flat rate. Payments cannot be split or pro-rated.

School Age Program

AM and PM Care:	$459.00
AM Care: 7 AM to school opening	$207.00
PM Care: school dismissal to 6 PM	$318.00

Locations:

Bollman Bridge	Elkridge	Laurel Woods	Triadelphia Ridge
Bellows Spring	Forest Ridge	Lisbon	Veterans
Bushy Park	Fulton	Manor Woods	Waverly
Dayton Oaks	Gorman Crossing	Pointers Run	West Friendship
Deep Run	Hollifield Station	Rockburn	
Ducketts Lane	Ilchester	St. John's Lane	

Can-TEEN Program

PM Care: school dismissal to 6 PM 2 Days/Wk - $120; 3 Days/Wk - $180; 5 Days/Wk - $299.00

Locations:

Bonnie Branch	Ellicott Mills	Lime Kiln	Thomas Viaduct
Elkridge Landing	Folly Quarter	Patapsco	

Inclusion

The Department of Recreation & Parks is pleased to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) regulations. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to register for our programs. At registration please include information regarding your child's disability and any accommodation requests. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) you may provide a copy for informational purposes. The information contained in the IEP will be used by the Therapeutic Recreation and Accommodations staff as supplemental material for the accommodation plan they will create after you have completed the Departmental Assessment Intake form. Please remember we are a recreation-based program setting and not an academic one. Your child's accommodation plan will be prepared with the intent to make their experience in our licensed child care program as successful as we can. It is our goal to have each child participate as fully as possible in all of our recreation activities with the least restrictive environments. The Department may provide accommodation services upon a parent/guardian's request, not all services are guaranteed. For additional services, please contact the Therapeutic Recreation & Accommodation Services Manager at 410-313-4628.

Inclusion/Accommodations may include but not limited to:

- Training provided for program and inclusion support staff.
- An increase in staff/participant ratio (two weeks advanced notice).
- Sign Language interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Adaptive activity equipment and/or supplies.
- Assistance in the provision of health services, which do not require medical training.

Inclusion/Accommodations services don't include:

- Providing a separate area or alternate activities for a significant portion (more than 25%) of the scheduled structured program.
- Exemptions of program rules and regulations regardless of ability or disability for the safety of all program participants and staff.
- Guarantee of specific staff for programs.
- Individualized therapy within a program.
- Purchasing of personal custom devices.

If a private companion is hired by a family, the following must be on file at the center before the private companion can attend the program, as per the MSDE Office of Child Care: employee emergency card, employment medical report, results of FBI and Maryland state criminal background checks, a release of information, an individual personnel information form, a copy of the their driver's license, a completed center orientation checklist, volunteer application and agreement, and a statement of duties. These forms are all available by contacting the Therapeutic & Inclusion Services Manager at 410-313-4628.

ADMISSION TO CARE –

Before your child can attend any Recreational Licensed Child Care program, you must first register and then complete the following forms that must remain on file: Forms are available for download at *https://howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/FormsandPublications.* All parents should have a legible copy of all required paperwork for each child who is enrolled in the RLC program.

- Health Inventory - Made of two (2) parts: Part I completed by a parent/guardian and Part II is completed by a physician. Part II cannot be dated more than one year prior to admission to the program. Part I is updated every January to be in compliance with OCC regulations.
- Emergency Contact Form - Completed by parent/guardian and lists all information needed to reach parents/emergency contacts and designates who else may pick up your child. A new one is completed every school year and summer season. It is also updated every January to be in compliance with OCC regulations.
- A "Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care" pamphlet: Please read this pamphlet, complete and sign the tear-off coupon on the back and be sure to turn it in with the other paperwork.
- Immunization record – This form is completed by a physician.
- Parent Contract - This form is to be completed by the responsible billing party. Financial information is confidential and per state law, we will not give out any financial information regarding your child's fees to any party other than the actual payer (received in a separate mailing from the Registration Team, along with the Auto-Deduct Form).

ATTENDANCE

Children registered in before and after care may arrive as early as 7 AM and must be picked up by 6 PM. The Director and your child's assigned teacher are responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance record for each child. Attendance is taken as children arrive in the morning and as they enter the program each afternoon. In the afternoon, staff check for each child who does not report to the program. Parents are asked to notify the Director of planned absences due to vacations, medical appointments or other reasons.

Parents must give written permission for their child to be released from the RLC program for any other activity*, even if it is sponsored by Recreation and Parks.* The note MUST include: the name of the program, dates and times the program runs, where the program meets and if the child will return to the RLC program. All children must report to the Director before going to a different program (i.e. chess, soccer etc.). The instructor of the other program needs to sign your child out of the after-school program. Participants of the programs are not allowed to sign themselves out of a before & after care program. At the end of the other program, the instructor must bring your child back to the cafeteria and sign them back in.

Request for records - A written request must be submitted at least 30 days in advance for copies of attendance sheets, or any other paperwork.

SIGN-IN/OUT POLICY

All child care programs require anyone picking up a child to show identification to the staff. No one other than those listed on the emergency card may pick up a child without previous written notification. If there are custody concerns, it is the parent/guardians' responsibility to notify the staff and provide a copy of any custody agreements/court papers signed-off by a Judge.

The Howard County Public School System provides space for the program at each site. Custodial staff will only be on duty during program hours and aren't responsible for your child at any time under any circumstances. You must walk your child inside the building each morning to make sure the Recreation and Parks staff has arrived. Each parent/guardian or person 16 years of age or older, must sign in their child in the morning and sign them out in the afternoon. Do not leave your child unattended. This policy must be strictly adhered to for the protection of your child(ren). Staff is required to remain on site until every child is picked up. Parents must notify us in writing of a change in the release policy (either deletion or addition of another person with permission to pick up your child or whether they can walk home) throughout the school year.

- Late Pick-up Charges: These fees cover additional expenses incurred when a child is not picked up by 6 pm. The payer on record from the Parent Contract will be billed for these fees. A parent picking up a child at 6:01 pm is late. (The time is determined by the clock in the school's cafeteria.) The following process applies:
  - First and second late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed as follows, $10 per child for the first fifteen minutes beyond 6 PM and $5 per child for each five minute period after that.
  - Third late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed, followed by notification from the RLC Supervisor.
  - Fourth late pick-up: Late slip, fees, possible suspension from the program.
  - The fees for a fifth late pick-up or more may be doubled or result in an increase of the fee stated above. Failure to make such payments will result in program suspension or dismissal. Each school center has a separate telephone number for the cafeteria. Please contact them in the event you are running late. We expect you to let us know who will be picking up your child by 6 PM. not that you will be arriving 10-20 minutes late. If the child still remains in our care at 6:30 PM, the police and Child Protective Services will be contacted. Continual lateness may result in dismissal from the program.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is essential that all work and home telephone numbers be kept current, as well as any change of address. Parents are responsible for this pertinent information for the protection of their child(ren), so please notify the Program Director of any changes. Updates are required in January in order to stay in compliance with Office of Child Care requirements. Registration MUST also be informed in writing either by FAX: 410-313-4658 or E-Mail registration@howardcountymd.gov. If someone else listed on

your emergency card is picking up your child, teachers will ask for a driver's license as identification. If someone **not listed** on your emergency card is picking up your child, please make sure the staff is notified in writing in advance. No one other than those listed by the parent/guardian may pick up a child without previous written notification. We will not release your child to anyone that does not have the proper identification. If there are custody concerns, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the staff in writing with a copy of a court order.

EMERGENCY PREAPREDNESS PLAN

Each site has a plan in place in case of emergencies or natural disasters. These plans are created by the site Director during a 6 hour MSDE approved training. They encompass two different plans based on the seriousness and type of emergency. You can speak with the Director for the locations used or check out the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted on the parent board. In the event a school has to be put on a lockdown for the safety of the children, please call 410-313-7275 for more information before 4:30 PM. After 4:30 PM please call the RLC administrative offices at 410-313-3706. Please keep in mind that sometimes during a lockdown, the program is removed from the cafeteria and therefore the staff cannot answer the center telephone.

FIELD TRIPS/TRANSPORTATION

Field trips may be taken on early dismissal days or optional days. If so, you will receive information prior to the day. Your child must attend the field trip, as no staff or children will remain behind at the site; this is true for school age, Can-Teen and Homework Club. Under no circumstances are staff permitted to provide participants with transportation to or from a program. Field trips may be taken a few times a year and all transportation will be arranged through Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks. All participants need to be on site at least 15 minutes prior to the trip departure time in order to attend.

SCHEDULED EARLY CLOSING

When the public schools are scheduled to close early, the after school program will begin directly when school is dismissed. Any child who is registered for the AM care only, may attend aftercare until the normal school dismissal time. There are no additional fees for early closing. Please notify the Director if your child will be attending in the afternoon and regularly does not.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SNOW DAY POLICY

Please tune in to local radio stations if there's a question about opening/closing of schools. Parents must make alternate child care arrangements in advance to cover such emergencies. Our inclement weather number is 410-313-4451; press 3. The information is updated by 7 am and as necessary throughout the day. The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Recreational Licensed Child Care policy regarding inclement weather/emergency procedure are as follows:

- If the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) closes schools early for any reason (inclement weather, mechanical failure, etc.) there is **no aftercare** provided by the Recreational Licensed Child Care. Children who are enrolled in an aftercare program are to follow the school's emergency plan (i.e. riding the bus home, walking home, etc.). It is the schools responsibility to make sure each child has an alternative to aftercare on their school emergency card for when there is no aftercare program when schools dismiss early.
- If Howard County Public Schools DO NOT closes school early **but** decide to cancel all after school and evening activities for any reason (inclement weather, mechanical failure, etc.) the RLC programs will remain open. RLC will staff each center with at least one RLC staff person until every child has been picked up (a school custodian will also remain on site). Each RLC program will have one assigned emergency staff person designated from the Recreation and Parks Administrative/Professional staff in case a RLC staff person is unable to make it into the program.
- When school is closed due to inclement weather, our programs will not operate.
- When school closes early due to an emergency or mechanical failure, the after school program will not operate.
- When school opening is delayed, our morning program will be delayed by the same amount of time. This program is only available to children who are regularly scheduled to attend the morning care program.
- In extreme circumstances (i.e. severe natural disasters, no heat, etc.) Howard County Recreation & Parks RLC may not be able to open, regardless of whether Howard County Public Schools close. In this situation you will be contacted via the email given when you registered.

BABYSITTING

Any babysitting with present or former staff of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is totally at the discretion of the parents/guardians of our program participants. We do not recommend or condone utilization of our staff for this service, however if they choose to enter into such an agreement at their own free will then arrangements must be based on the independent responsibility and judgment of the parent/guardian. Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks shall not be responsible for any claims or liability in connection with such babysitting activities.

PROPERTY DAMAGE / VANDALISM

In the event it is determined a participant is responsible for vandalizing Board of Education, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks or another participants' property, the parents/guardians shall be financially responsible for all damages. This may include replacement or restoration of damaged property. Parents/guardians will receive an itemized bill of the damaged property.

BEHAVIOR

Behavioral problems may occasionally occur. Some conflict among children is to be expected as children are still developing social skills. When children are with each other, their personalities won't mix perfectly all the time; this is a normal part of children's total growth and development. Some young children have a hard time seeing other people's point of view and so they think their needs are the most important. It is important to recognize that each child is unique. Different children respond positively to different activities, guidance strategies and communication styles. Staff will encourage and model sharing, being respectful and hands to self. The classroom will follow the established center rules with input from the children to develop their own classroom expectations. If problems should arise, the teacher will assist the child(ren) in problem-solving the situation. The Howard County Department of Recreation Parks staff has been given the following guidelines:

¨ *First Offense:* Verbal warning/reprimand with redirection and/or time for self-reflection; options for other appropriate choices, documentation and notification of parent/guardian.

¨ *Second Offense*: Consultation with parent/guardian with documentation and parent conference with Division Manager.

¨ *Final Offense*: Possible suspension or dismissal from the program.

The Department of Recreation and Parks reserves the right to limit, deny or expel a participant when the health and/or safety of the individual, other participants, staff, volunteers, and/or the public is threatened. Any child observed in a physical fight with another child **will automatically be** suspended from the program. Behavior problems that *may* result in program expulsion include but are not limited to: behavior presenting a danger to the participant, other participants, or the staff and/or action that persists after a behavior plan has been implemented. We will make every effort to provide a safe, constructive recreation program; we will work to create positive climates that minimizes the potential for inappropriate behavior. However we will need your assistance to ensure that your child adheres to the rules and regulations of the program by reinforcing appropriate behaviors at home. When misbehavior occurs, appropriate intervention techniques will be administered and documentation will occur. Under no circumstances are participants to be subjected to verbal or physical abuse by other participants or staff. Parents/guardians will be contacted if inappropriate behavior persists.

NUTRITION: Snacks and Lunches on Optional Full Days
Snacks are provided for children in the before care and after care programs in accordance with the Office of Child Care regulations. Safe, fresh drinking water is available to children at all times indoors and outdoors, including snack time.

Staff use snack time to discuss healthy nutrition and food concepts. Staff sit with the children to encourage social interactions, conversations, to ask questions and talk about nutrition concepts related to the foods they are eating. Teachers help children gauge their level of fullness when requests for second helpings are made. Students learn to observe and model good manners at the table and take the responsibility for cleaning up after themselves. Food is never used as a punishment or reward in our center.

We have implemented ***'Fun Fit Fridays'*** at our centers. Each Friday children will participate in a healthy food activity, it may be serving fruits and/or veggies at snack time or in the form of a healthy cooking activity during a rotation. Each month the site will focus on one particular physical activity such as yoga, line dancing or Pilates on Fridays. For more information, please see your site director.

The Office of Child Care does not permit outside snack, unless there is a specialized dietary need (i.e. severe allergies), and the dietary requirements/restrictions MUST be noted by a physician on Part II of the Health Inventory. If your child must bring in their own snack, they will eat the snack at a separate table for the safety of the other participants. Cross contamination is a grave concern since numerous manufacturers' process products where peanuts and/or other nut products are processed. **Please do not bring any nut products of any kind into the program**, including 'Nutella'. Even a slight residue on chairs, toys or carpets can cause a life-threatening reaction in a child with a nut allergy. **All Howard County Recreation and Parks programs are nut free.**

This policy encompasses Optional Full Day programs. Parents do provide lunch for their child(ren) on these days. **Please do not pack any nut products in your child's lunch**. If these products are found in your child's lunch, they will be asked to put it away, parents will be notified and either an appropriate lunch can be brought to the program for the child or it will be as well supplemented as possible with available snack items. During these optional days, there is milk available for the children to drink. Healthy lunches contain a serving each of fruit (1/2 cup), meat or meat alternate (1oz), whole grain (1oz) and low fat milk (1/2 cup), as well as two servings of a vegetable (totaling ½ cup). Healthy food preparation techniques are also suggested, such as steamed vegetables, baked foods, etc. Foods that do not meet healthy standards, such as soda, sweetened tea, fruit drinks, full-fat and flavored milk, candy, cookies, sugary cereals are not recommended for lunch time. Most of these types of foods have sugar or a sugar derivative as their first ingredient and therefore do not fulfill a child's nutritional needs. Since refrigerator space is not available, families are asked to put an ice pack in their child's snack/lunch bag.

A menu is provided for you to see a sample of the snacks we serve. When we have fresh fruit or vegetables, it will be written on the menu that is posted on the parent board. **For any family nights or special events all food brought to the center MUST be store bought due to children with severe allergies.**

Sample Menu Planner:

AM = Cheerios w/ Milk and Grape Juice PM = Cheez-Its and Apple Juice Additional Items:	AM = Gingersnaps w/ Applesauce and Water PM = Granola Bars w/ Orange Juice Additional Items:	AM = Ritz Crackers w/ Pears and Water PM = Pretzels and Grape Juice Additional Items:	AM = Kix w/ Milk and Orange Juice PM = Cheese and Crackers w/ Grape Juice Additional Items:	AM = Teddy Grahams w/ Pears and Water PM = Pears w/ Goldfish and Water Additional Items:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

We provide all children with opportunities for physical activity throughout the day. Children have the opportunity or at least 30 minutes of physical activity in the morning and afternoon programs. All children are provided outdoor time at least once daily, weather and air quality permitting.

In the case of severe weather similar activities are provided in the schools' gymnasium. Our center provides equipment and materials for active play and movement that support the development of gross motor skills and are appropriate for all children. During outdoor play, children practice gross motor skills with a variety of activities, such as running, skipping, kicking and throwing balls; while reinforcing good sportsmanship, team building and social skills. Children who may have special needs can participate in physical activities with their peers or through an accommodation plan, established by the Therapeutic Recreation Manager.

Our facilities are regularly inspected to ensure the safety of all children. Teachers make sure the outdoor environment is safe by discarding broken materials, cleaning contaminated areas and picking up large branches. Teachers are stationed at different points around the playground to be able to watch all children. Teachers are required to participate in physical activity with their students to increase child participation and model healthy levels of activity. Check out the *Lets Move – America's Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids* at www.letsmove.gov/active-families or the *NFL Play 60* at www.nflrush.com/play60/kids for ways to get the children of today healthy and moving.

Television - TV's, computer time and tablets are not a part of our monthly planning and will not be used more than once per month if at all. If it is used, it is age-appropriate and educational; used in conjunction with an academic subject like Sid the Science Kid. Most programs do not have any access to computers or tablets.

INJURY

The staff is required to complete an accident report when a child is injured. The parent/guardian will be notified if a child sustains a major injury, otherwise they will be notified at pick-up time. You will receive a copy of the report and a copy will remain on file at the center. In the event of a serious injury, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital for treatment, however the hospital requires parental consent to begin treatment.

ILLNESS

In the event a child becomes ill during our program, every attempt will be made to contact the parents/guardians first. If the staff is unable to reach them, they will begin contacting the persons listed as the emergency contact. Your child will be made to feel as comfortable as possible until someone arrives to pick them up. Please notify us in the event your child contracts a communicable disease such as measles, chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc. If your child is vomiting or has a fever, they must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program. If a child is absent due to illness for three days, a note from the physician is required stating the child may return to the program. If your child is sent home from school sick, they may not be brought to the aftercare program on that same day.

If your child has any of the following, please keep him/her home until symptoms improve:

- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Temperature over 99° F
- Contagious disease
- Severe head cold
- Earaches
- Sore throat and/or severe/persistent cough
- Skin rashes – not treated by a physician

Children MUST BE free from fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the program.

HEAD LICE POLICY

If a child is found to have head lice, the parents/guardians will be notified. The child will only be readmitted to the program after the staff determines that treatment has been effective and/or it has been 24 hours since the treatment began. A notice will be posted, along with a communicable disease factsheet. There are several products on the market that can be used to kill head lice. Some products are available over the counter and some require a prescription. All persons in the household should be treated and the treatment procedure is available at the centers. Parents/guardians will be notified regarding the treatment procedure in the event of an outbreak.

MEDICATION

A Medication Order Form, available at each site or by calling Recreation and Parks, must accompany all prescribed and over-the-counter medication. The Medication Order Form must be completed and signed by a physician. The form should also give specific details on the type of medication, dosage, time to be given and how many days the medication is to be administered and a physician's signature is required. If your child requires the use of an Epi-Pen, there must be ONE on site at all times. All medication must be in the original container labeled with the medication name, physician's name, dosage, and expiration date.

Except for acetaminophen and topical medications, no over-the counter medication will be administered unless a Medication Order Form, completed by a physician, is on file. Medication can be administered only according to instructions on the label. A minimum of one dose of prescription medication must be administered at home first. All medication will be stored in a locked box at each center per licensing regulations. Please be sure to check all expiration dates of the medication prior to bringing it to the program.

At the conclusion of the program, be sure to take your child's medication with you. If you forget it will be sent to the RLC administrative offices at 7060 Oakland Mills Rd, Suite P, Columbia, MD 21046. You will receive a call and have ten business days to pick it up. After ten days it will be disposed of.

NEWSLETTERS/PARENT INFORMATION

At each center in the vicinity of the sign-in/out sheet is a parent board with information including, but not limited to the daily schedule/activity plans, monthly menu, our license to operate and the COMAR regulations that guide our program, are all available for you to peruse. Each month you will also receive a newsletter. In minimizing paper waste and supporting the "Go Green" initiative, all newsletters will be sent electronically. They will convey upcoming monthly events, reminders, special activities and other center communications. There will be a hard copy at the site for those who do not have email access posted on the parent board. We are requesting at least one regularly used email address per family. Email addresses will only be used for the sole purpose of sending newsletters. It is very important you provide your site director with any changes to your email account throughout the school year. The newsletters will also contain important reminders from the Registration team about enrollment dates and critical deadlines. **Pre-registration for the next school year begins October 4.** There will also be a reminder from the Registration team on the sign-in/out sheet with important registration information throughout the year.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Customer feedback is essential in maintaining high quality child care centers. Evaluations are typically sent twice a year via email; once in the fall and once in the spring (the same email address you provided for the newsletter is used). We urge parents/guardians to take the time to discuss the questions and responses with your child(ren) and include them in the feedback provided. They are our most important customer and we would like to provide the best service possible.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS

Each site has on open house the Thursday or Friday before school begins. Staff is on site should parents/guardians want to drop-off paperwork or meet the staff. There are also family events throughout the school year such as talent shows, family breakfasts etc. We encourage parents/ guardians to be a part of their child's program if possible. If you have any special talent or skill you would like to share, please speak to the site Director. At times throughout the year parents/guardians will visit and be a part of the program i.e. as a special guest speaker, chaperone on a trip etc. If it is a one-time volunteer, the individual must fill out a volunteer form online and print the completed form to take to the center. If anyone (parents/guardians, therapist, special educators, etc.) will be visiting on a regular basis they must be fingerprinted and complete a more in-depth volunteer application, a Release of Information (notarized), physical form and an Individual Personnel Information form.

FAMILY CONFERENCES

Staff is available daily to speak with you about either the program or your child. However, we will also offer 'conference' time; once in the fall and once in the spring. This is a chance for you to meet with the Director and have their full attention and complete privacy. There will be a sign-up sheet if you would like to have the opportunity to speak to the Director about your child. Arrival and dismissal times are not always appropriate times for these discussions, as it does not allow for much privacy.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks will not be responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal property. Items such as electronic games, tablets, cell phones, mp3 players, jewelry, money, sports equipment, toys, etc. should not be brought to the program. Staff has also been instructed not to hold personal belongings for any of the children.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Looking for a weekend class for your child or a cooking class for yourself? Be sure to check out our seasonal brochure at howardcountymd.gov/seasonalactivityguides.htm or call Registration at 410-313-7275. There is something for everyone in the family! Robinson Nature Center, 410-313-0400 (howardcountymd.gov/RNCprograms.htm), has a planetarium, offers hiking programs and much more for the entire family. The diverse programs offered by the Columbia Festival of the Arts is worth checking out at columbiafestival.org.

The Howard County Library system has a wonderful programs offering academic assistance to all Howard County children, along with a plethora of other programs (hclibrary.org). If you looking for resources in parenting check out the Office of Children's Services, 410-313-1940, (or their Family First Institute) at howardcountymd.gov. Healthy Howard (healthyhoward.org) *"Healthy Howard is an initiative that's unique to Maryland and the region. We're bringing together all facets of the community to create a public health model that can improve the health and well-being of every resident."*

The local Health Department, 410-313-6300, can offer assistance and resources too. You can reach the ARC at www.archoward.org or 410-730-0638 if you are looking for resources for individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities. Each year we update these resources and look for new resources in our community to share with you. If we can be of assistance in obtaining other resources in our community, please feel free to speak with the Director.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

We have established these expectations in order to assist in providing a safe and happy environment where everyone feels accepted. The staff does reinforce these ideas on a daily basis to help each child be better prepared socially.

CHILDREN:

- Children will be kind and respectful to everyone.
- Children are expected to keep all body parts to themselves (e.g. no hitting, spitting, biting, etc.) and follow the posted center rules.
- Children will treat everyone as they would like to be treated. Children will not threaten to do physical harm (e.g. raising a fist, swing an object, etc.) to another child or center staff.
- Children will not bring any real or toy weapons to the center.
- If a child is hit, intimidated or harassed for any reason, he/she is to report the incident to center staff so proper disciplinary action can be taken.
- Children will not leave their group for any reason without permission. Staff are responsible for the children's safety and must know their whereabouts at all times.
- Children will participate in all activities unless there is a medical reason why they may not.

PARENTS:

- Keep program staff informed of changes to all paperwork (emergency card or health inventory), attendance, contact phone numbers or email addresses.
- All parents should have a legible copy of all required paperwork for each child who is enrolled in the RLC program.
- Sign your child(ren) in and out daily with the time and your initials.
- Until the staff become familiar with you, it is necessary to show photo identification.
- Be on time to pick up your child. If you find you may be late please contact the center as soon as possible.
- Notify the staff if your child will not be attending after care, the more advanced notice, the better.
- Have the centers' phone number available to contact the program whenever the need arises.
- Stay current with monthly payments and keep all registration information current.
- Read the monthly newsletter for the most up-to-date center happenings and registration information.
- Please conduct yourselves in a professional and kind manner at all times to other children, parents and site staff. Failure to do so may result in your child's disenrollment from the program.
- It is the parent's responsibility to read, understand and comply with the contents of this manual.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE
A $50 non-refundable registration fee is required to register in advance for the upcoming school year. Families currently in the program will be given a chance to pre-register before the public. New families may enroll on or after the Open Enrollment date advertised each year. Please see pre-registration dates in bold below.

PRE-REGISTRATION
The purpose of pre-registration of current participants into child care for the next school year is one of Customer Service. Current participants, making regular monthly payments have the opportunity to reserve space in our program for the following school year. This registration is first-come, first-serve; because of demographics change there is the potential for programs to fill during the pre-registration timeframe; (siblings coming in, current participants changing their hours, fewer fifth graders graduating, changes to school hours or length of school day and re-districting). There are limitations to pre-registration, fees must be up-to-date and timeframes must be adhered to. The non-refundable $50 registration fee is due at the time of enrollment.

Pre-Registration Period
October 4-31, 2016 will begin pre-registration for the 2017-2018 school year for the children currently enrolled in the 2017-2018 school year.

Open Enrollment
If you miss pre-registration (no extensions or exceptions), then you will need to register through open enrollment beginning **November 1, 2016**. Telephone, walk-in and mail-in registrations are processed as received from that date forward, either where space is available or as additions to the waiting list.

PAYMENT
Payments for the Recreational Licensed Child Care Program are due two weeks in advance on the 17th of each month. The Childcare Contract must be signed by the party responsible for billing per child. Although we can accept payments from other parties, we can only have one party responsible for the payments. Invoices for all fees incurred will only be charged and sent to the person on record as the billing party. A contract must be on file for each child or they will not be allowed to continue in the program. The Federal Tax ID number is 52-6000965 and is printed on your receipt. We do not provide a yearly report of payments. You must keep your receipts or print them from your online account. Recreation and Parks will not process post-dated checks.
Payment Due Date
The $50 non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of enrollment for either returning or incoming participants. The full September payment will be invoiced in **June 17 and due by July 17, 2016**. Fees are subject to change and will not be posted for the fall until the spring of the same year. Should your needs change, we ask you to notify us in writing as soon as you are aware of the

change EITHER via email to registration@howardcountymd.gov or by fax 410-313-4658 OR see refund policy page 22.

Payment Options:

- Option 1: For automatic credit card monthly deductions or electronic check payments (ECP) complete the authorization form included in the registration package. It can be downloaded from our website at www.howardcountymd.gov/rap
- Option 2: A convenient coupon book is available for your use. Please include a coupon with each payment (make checks payable to Director of Finance) and mail to Attn: RLC Registration, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd., Columbia, MD 21046.
- Option 3: For ECP and on-line credit card payment options, see the Howard County Recreation and Parks website: www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP . Please note you must request and be approved for an on-line account before you can make payments on-line. In addition, fees are billed to the parent/guardian who signs the Contract and will only show up under their on-line account.
- Option 4: ECP and telephone credit card payments can be made from Monday through Friday 8 am-4:30 pm at 410-313-7275. Visa or MasterCard, American Express and Discover accepted.
- Option 5: Bill Pay Bank Checks mailed without coupon. Please put your child's program location (and last name) if different in the memo section for these payments. Several issues have arisen with these types of payments, please note the following:
    - A late fee will be assessed if Bill Pay bank checks are received after the payment deadline. Please make sure your bank knows the payment is due on the 17th of each month.

SINGLE PAYMENT POLICY

The Department's policy requires full payment by one person for enrollment/monthly tuition fees. Payments can be made by cash, check, money order, credit card or a combination thereof. The Department does not accept partial payment of fees from one person with a promise that the remainder of the fees will be paid at another time or by another person.

- Accounts which require two payers—Morning care fees and after care fees can be charged separately. Payers may elect to enroll and pay for the services independently. Program combination discounts will not apply to this payment method.
- *Incorrect form of payment*: Person A pays $223 then, at a later time Person B pays $223. The combined payments equal the total $446 but are two individual payments made directly to the Director of Finance.
- *Correct form of payment*: Person A pays full payment of $446 directly to the Director of Finance. It is then Person A's responsibility to obtain funds from Person B. or Person A enrolls the participant in the before care program and will be responsible for paying the before care fees (in addition to signing a contract for the before care services only). Person B enrolls the

participant in the aftercare program and will be responsible for paying the aftercare fees (in addition to signing a contract for the aftercare services only).

ADDITIONAL FEES

Late payments: Payments for the Recreational Licensed Child Care Programs are due two weeks in advance, on the 17th of each month. A late payment fee of $30 will be assessed if payment is not received within one week of the due date. Failure to keep payments current will result in termination of your child's participation in the program. In the event payment is not received, the following procedures will be followed:

- An invoice will be sent from the registration office indicating the amount owed, the date due and a reminder that your child will not be permitted to participate in the program effective 15 days from the date of the invoice.
- A certified letter will be sent indicating the last day of your child's participation in the program.
- Delinquent payments will be turned over to the Office of Law for collection within 30 days of the date on the above mentioned certified letter. Questions regarding delinquent payments should be directed to 410-313-7275.
- Returned Checks: Howard County charges a $35 administrative fee for any check returned.
- September's Fee: once registered for the next upcoming school year with the Registration fee required, the September payment will be due July 17th prior to the start of the school year.
- Late Pick-up Charges: These fees cover additional expenses incurred when a child is not picked up by 6 pm. The payer on record from the Parent Contract will be billed for these fees. A parent picking up a child at 6:01 pm is late (the time is determined by the clock in the school's cafeteria.) The following process applies:
    - First and second late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed as follows, $10 per child for the first 15 minutes beyond 6 PM and $5 per child for each five minute period after that time.
    - Third late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed, followed by notification from the RLC Supervisor.
    - Fourth late pick-up: Late slip, fees, possible suspension from the program.
    - The fees for a fifth late pick-up or more may be doubled or result in an increase of the fee stated above. Failure to make such payments will result in program suspension or dismissal. Each school center has a separate telephone number for the cafeteria. Please contact them in the event you are running late. We expect you to let us know who will be picking up your child by 6:00 PM. not that you will be arriving 10-20 minutes late. If the child still remains in our care at 6:30 PM, the police and Child Protective Services will be contacted. Continual lateness may result in dismissal from the program.

RECEIPTS/FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Internet payments do not generate receipts. You may access them yourself on-line. Receipts are automatically emailed upon receipt of payment. Please retain for tax purposes. Our Federal tax ID

number is 52-6000965. We cannot generate year-end reports for tax purposes. Again, please keep monthly receipts.

Financial information is confidential and as per state law, we cannot/will not give out any financial information regarding your child's care and fees to any party other than to the actual payer. Please do not have your spouse or another party call regarding balance due or payment records.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

For those parents/guardians who receive assistance from Social Services, it is imperative that you complete the Child Care Assistance Application form and meet with your social worker before registering for the program. The $50 registration fee is not eligible to be covered by POC vouchers or scholarship rates. For parents/guardians who may not be eligible for financial assistance from Social Services, the Department of Recreation and Parks has a Scholarship Program and payment plans. Tuition may be reduced if there is a financial need. We are sensitive to the needs of participants and are willing to work out special arrangements. To obtain a scholarship application, call 410-313-4659 or email (registration@howardcountymd.gov).

PROGRAM STATUS

A family's need may change during the course of the school year. You must notify us immediately if you wish to change sessions or switch to AM and/or PM care. Please put your advanced notification of change(s) or withdrawal from the program in writing to Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, Attn: RLC Registration, at registration@howardcountymd.gov or fax to 410-313-4658.

PROGRAM CREDITS

In the event of unusually inclement weather or repeated mechanical failure, we can grant what has been called a "snow credit." The decision to grant a "snow credit" is based on how many consecutive days' schools are closed and is only considered when more than 5 days or more are missed. It is not automatic that "snow credits" will be issued every time schools are closed due to inclement weather especially if the days are added to the end of the school year.

REFUND POLICY

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks understand a parent/guardians need for child care may change during the course of the school year. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule. In the event a refund is necessary, you must send the request in writing to Nicola Morgal, RLC Superintendent, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia, MD 21046. You may email registration@howardcountymd.gov or fax 410-313-4658. Advanced notification is required for all refund requests, as there will be no retroactive refunds. Refund requests are generally granted due to parental schedule changes, securing another childcare provider, or a move by the family. Please indicate the reason for the refund request and confirm where you would like us to mail the refund. Please allow approximately four weeks to

process your request. Requests for refunds for September 2016 must be received by August 7, 2016 to accommodate the waiting list. Credit toward the next month's payment will be given if a child is absent due to illness for at least five successive days. For a medical credit, a note from a physician is necessary. Please notify the Registration Department in writing.

OPTIONAL FULL DAY REFUNDS

In order to receive a credit or refund for unused optional days, a written request is required five (5) business days in advance of the optional day program. No refunds will be granted after the programs start date.

CONCLUSION

We are pleased to be able to offer this service and will make every effort to make your child's experience a positive one. Our center encourages family involvement to support and promote children's healthy eating and physical activity habits. We welcome family input and communicate in ways that respect families' cultures and customs. Nutrition education and physical activity information is provided for parents through the electronic monthly newsletter. We encourage parents to contact us with any questions or suggestions.

The Recreational Licensed Child Care Program is licensed by the Office of Child Care within the Maryland Department of Education. The local regional telephone number is 410-750-8771. Please feel free to contact them with any questions or concerns. Finally, we want to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to get to know you and your family.

RLC Weekly Schedule

	Monday	***Tuesday***	***Wednesday***	***Thursday***	***Friday***
7:00 - 7:30	Welcome Kids Choice - Quiet Games/ Reading Center	Welcome Kids Choice - Quiet Games/ Reading Center	Welcome Kids Choice - Quiet Games/ Reading Center	Welcome Kids Choice - Quiet Games/ Reading Center	Welcome Kids Choice - Quiet Games/ Reading Center
7:30 - 8:10 (8:05-8:10 clean-up/ transition)	Hands on Activity Music/Drama (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity - Science/Nature (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Fun & Fit Fridays- A Healthy food activity & group activity (i.e. yoga, line dancing) (Cafeteria/Art Room)
8:10 - 8:45 (8:40-8:45 clean-up/ transition)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)
	(Groups switch @ 8:10 am)	(Groups switch @ 8:10 am)	(Groups switch @ 8:10 am)	(Groups switch @ 8:10 am)	(Groups switch @ 8:10 am)
8:45 - 9:10	Wash Hands/ Snack	Wash Hands/ Snack	Wash Hands/ Snack	Wash Hands/ Snack	Wash Hands/ Snack
9:10 - 9:15	Transitional Activity/ Dismissal	Transitional Activity/ Dismissal	Transitional Activity/ Dismissal	Transitional Activity/ Dismissal	Transitional Activity/ Dismissal
	(Groups are separated by age and will rotate activities in both the am & pm programs in accordance with OCC regs.)				
3:50 - 4:10	Attendance Wash Hands/Snack	Attendance Wash Hands/Snack	Attendance Wash Hands/Snack	Attendance Wash Hands/Snack	Attendance Wash Hands/Snack
4:10 - 4:50	Hands on Activity Music/Drama (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity Science/Nature (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Hands on Activity (Cafeteria/Art Room)	Fun & Fit Fridays
4:50 - 5:30	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)	Organized Game (Outside/Gym)
	(Groups switch @ 4:20pm)	(Groups switch @ 4:20pm)	(Groups switch @ 4:20pm)	(Groups switch @ 4:20pm)	(Groups switch @ 4:20pm)
5:30 - 6:00	Kids' Choice - Quiet Group Games Clean-Up Goodbyes	Kids' Choice - Quiet Group Games Clean-Up Goodbyes	Kids' Choice - Quiet Group Games Clean-Up Goodbyes	Kids' Choice - Quiet Group Games Clean-Up Goodbyes	Kids' Choice - Quiet Group Games Clean-Up Goodbyes

* Activities are planned based on the age group of the participants.

* Homework time is available in quite area of cafeteria & also an option during group rotations.

* The TV will not be used more than once/month, if at all

MISSION

To responsibly manage natural resources; provide excellent parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities for the community; and ensure the highest quality of life for current and future generations.

VISION

The Department of Recreation and Parks strives to deliver recreation and leisure opportunities that will improve the health and well-being of the community and to serve as model stewards of the environment by managing, protecting, and conserving our resources for a sustainable future.

CORE VALUES

- Exceptional Customer Service
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Knowledgeable, Well-trained Staff
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Trend Setting

Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS